

SOMERFIELD PLC

Leveraging Business Value Through Business Optimised Infrastructure

CASE STUDY

Somerfield is a high street supermarket with stores in many prominent locations throughout the UK offering high quality food with a particular emphasis on fresh foods and convenient shopping. Somerfield stores provide a modern retail environment in a convenient location with friendly and efficient service.

SUMMARY

COMPANY: Somerfield Plc

INDUSTRY: Retail

CHALLENGE: A change in managed network service provision eroded detailed knowledge within the LAN and Data Centre architectures. High levels of change resulted in multiple network outages and high profile availability issues. The infrastructure was struggling to service the quick pace of a modern retail business.

SOLUTION: Regain knowledge lost during service transition and provide detailed technical analysis to clearly understand the nature of the problem.

Engage Gyrocom's Business Optimised Infrastructure model to clearly articulate the link between the technical complexities and the impact on service availability before progressing with the required changes.

Restore core stability by transitioning Data Centre to a much simpler, 'refreshed' design and address critical wireless technologies to improve coverage and service availability.

BENEFIT:

- Regained infrastructure control following managed service transition.
- Provided a mechanism to identify and address the underlying root cause of issues with strategies to deal with stability and service availability.
- An improved ability to relate network design and provision to business requirements in a clear and concise way.

In the current competitive food retail market Somerfield has focused on its clear strength: providing shoppers with an easy alternative to the larger out-of-town supermarkets whilst maintaining a commitment to fresh quality foods. In 2006 Somerfield represented:

- Over 1,000 stores nationwide & approximately 50,000 staff
- 12 million customer visits every week
- More than 4000 own label products & over £5bn in sales

In March 2009, The Co-operative Group completed the acquisition of Somerfield plc. at a cost of £1.565bn. A two year large scale refit program is currently well underway whereby Somerfield stores will be rebranded as The Co-operative Food.

THE CHALLENGE:

Gyrocom were introduced to Somerfield in 2006, following the transition of managed network service provider. The change in service provision had resulted in the erosion of detailed knowledge within the LAN and Data Centre architectures.

In a transitional environment, the high levels of change were manifesting in multiple network outages and high profile service availability issues. Elements of the core infrastructure were based on legacy technology and the availability of appropriately skilled resources was a real problem. It was recognised that focus had to be applied in addressing the root cause of issues; however, there was limited capability in place to address this in any detail. The result was that issues recurred and as a direct consequence of the high levels of change, the infrastructure environment was struggling to service the quick pace of a modern retail business.

THE SOLUTION:

Gyrocom's first challenge was to regain the knowledge lost during service transition and provide the business with a clear and concise understanding of the nature of the problems they were experiencing. Our approach was to invest high-level resource to better understand the business priorities in addition to the detailed technical analysis required in order to build the full picture. This enabled the articulation of the underlying issues and the development with the Client of a structured program of change to address them.

Through the engagement of a Gyrocom Business Technology Consultant we were able to quickly recognise that 24x7x365 availability was critical, especially within the core retail systems and logistics operations. Any downtime represented a real cost to the business. It was the ability to clearly articulate the link between the technical complexities and how this impacted service availability that enabled Gyrocom to progress the required changes.

The resultant improvement programme initially focussed on core systems and data centre stability. Legacy technologies, unnecessary complexity and single points of failure were removed. The Data Centre architecture was transitioned to a much simpler design with a focus on "renew and refresh" rather than "**rip and replace**".

Once core stability had been addressed the focus shifted to the distributed edge networks within the HQ location and UK depot estate. Wireless technologies were critical for effective operation within this environment and Gyrocom transitioned Somerfield from a static coverage model to a dynamic, self-healing solution. Coverage and service availability were immediately improved.

Throughout this process it was evident that little management information (MI) was available in respect of the infrastructure deployment. It was recognised that the new managed service provision provided little functionality in this area. Traditional managed service models within the LAN and Data Centre had proven too costly and difficult to implement. The Gyrocom

"OneStream" proposition was able to bridge this gap with the provision of a fully monitored and pro-active support service at a price point that was significantly less than equivalent re-active only services.

Today Gyrocom provides an integrated service to the Somerfield business with on-site personnel acting as an integral part of the wider team. Network stability and service availability are dramatically improved and this is evident in the recent integration activity to the Co-operative Group that was successfully achieved within very aggressive timeframes. Gyrocom's services are now transitioning to the new group with the recent deployment of improved store security architecture in support of compliance activities.

Our aim is to act as a "**trusted advisor**" and through the effective implementation of the Business Optimised Infrastructure model we have been able to help Somerfield better service their core business objectives.

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Gyrocom quickly became a reliable partner in the stabilisation of the Network service and the development and implementation of strategies to support business needs going forward. They were able to supply highly skilled resources to deliver these initiatives in a professional and integrated way. This resulted in a marked improvement in the stability of the network, which underpinned a programme of improvement across the whole of the Technical Infrastructure.

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Neil Jones – IT Director,
Somerfield Stores Limited.

THE BENEFIT:

Gyrocom's engagement with Somerfield has provided the following key benefits:

- The ability to regain infrastructure control following managed service transition.
- Provide a mechanism to identify and address the underlying root cause of issues with strategies to deal with:
 - Improved stability.
 - Improved service availability.
 - Improved supportability.
 - Improved information availability.
 - Improved management reporting.
 - Reduced complexity.
 - Reduced support costs.
 - Increased efficiency.
- An improved ability to relate network design and provision to business requirements in a clear and concise way.

TO FIND OUT HOW GYROCOM AND THE BUSINESS OPTIMISED INFRASTRUCTURE CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS.

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